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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 11 October 1991, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. AL-KHUSSAIBY (Vice-President)	(Oman)
later:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. AL-KHUSSAIBY (Vice-President)	(Oman)
later:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)

- Statement by the President
- Tentative Programme of Work
- Crisis of Democracy and Human Rights in Haiti: Draft resolution (A/46/L.8) [145]

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We still await the arrival of the first, second and third speakers. On this occasion, I should like to state that I have reviewed the attendance list for the last 17 days and it gives me pleasure to announce that the delegation of Brunei Darussalam was the only delegation that attended all the meetings from their very beginning and always on time. It was followed by many other delegations. I do not wish to enter into details. I am referring here to 18 meetings. Some other delegations were present at 17, some at 16, some at 15 meetings. I should like to thank the delegation of Brunei Darussalam for its punctuality in attending the meetings. I hope everybody will follow suit.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Since we have to wait for this morning's speakers, I shall read out a tentative programme of work.

I should like to remind members that last Tuesday, 8 October, I informed them that, after consultations carried out on my behalf, I had prepared a tentative programme of work and schedule for the General Assembly. I should like to reiterate that I would hope to keep to that schedule as closely as possible so that the Assembly may discharge its responsibilities in an orderly fashion. I therefore appeal to those representatives submitting draft resolutions to do so sufficiently in advance so that the membership has adequate time to examine them.

I should also like to remind them that draft resolutions involving expenditure require more lead time in order to allow for the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee to review the programme budget implications before the Assembly takes action on the draft resolutions.

I should further like to remind members that while the Assembly fixed the date of Monday, 14 September 1992, for the closing of the forty-sixth session, it also fixed the date of Tuesday, 17 December 1991, for the Assembly to recess until next year.

Last Tuesday, I gave members a tentative programme of work until Monday, 28 October.

The following is the tentative programme of plenary meetings until the recess of the General Assembly.

On Thursday, 31 October, in the morning, the Assembly will take up agenda item 30, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of

(The President)

African Unity", which had been originally scheduled for Monday, 28 October, in the afternoon. The Assembly will also consider agenda item 137, "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields".

On Monday, 4 November, in the morning, the Assembly will take up agenda item 17 (c), "Election of nineteen members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law".

On Monday, 4 November, in the afternoon, the Assembly will take up agenda item 15 (b), "Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council", and begin consideration of agenda item 143, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations", which will continue on Tuesday, 5 November.

On Friday, 8 November, in the morning, the Assembly will take up agenda item 10, "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization"; agenda item 13, "Report of the International Court of Justice"; and agenda item 21, "Critical economic situation in Africa: (a) Final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990; (b) Africa's commodity problems".

On Wednesday, 13 November, in the morning, the Assembly will consider agenda item 31, "The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives)"; agenda item 18 (g), "Appointment of members of the Joint Inspection Unit"; agenda item 18 (h), "Appointment of the members of the Consultative Committee of the United Nations Development Fund for Women"; and agenda item 18 (i), "Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences".

(The President)

On Thursday, 14 November, in the morning, the Assembly will take up agenda item 17 (b), "Election of the members of the International Law Commission".

On Monday, 18 November, and on Tuesday, 19 November, in the morning, the Assembly will consider agenda item 19, "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples".

On Tuesday, 19 November, in the afternoon, the Assembly will consider the reports of the Fourth Committee.

On Thursday, 21 November, the Assembly will begin consideration of agenda item 33, "Question of Palestine".

On Monday, 25 November, in the morning, the Assembly will take up agenda item 32, "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic".

On Monday, 25 November, in the afternoon, the Assembly will continue its consideration of agenda item 33, "Question of Palestine".

On Tuesday, 26 November, the Assembly will begin consideration of agenda item 35, "The situation in the Middle East".

On Monday, 2 December, the Assembly will begin consideration of agenda item 37, "Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa", and of agenda item 102, "United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa".

On Thursday, 5 December, the Assembly will take up agenda item 15 (c), "Election of a member of the International Court of Justice".

It is my intention to consider the reports of the Main Committees during the second week of December.

During that week, on Tuesday, 10 December. the Assemblv will also consider agenda item 36, "Law of the sea".

(The President)

On Monday, 16 December, in the morning, under agenda item 98 (a), "Implementation of human rights instruments", the Assembly will hold a commemorative meeting for the observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Further, I should like to remind representatives that the Pledging Conference for Development Activities will be held in the morning of Tuesday, 5 November, and of Wednesday, 6 November. The Conference will be opened by the Secretary-General.

I should also like to inform members that the announcement of voluntary contributions to the 1992 programme of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees will take place on Tuesday, 12 November, in the morning.

Lastly, the announcement of voluntary contributions to the 1992 programmes of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East will take place on Tuesday, 3 December, in the morning.

This tentative schedule which I have just announced will appear in the verbatim record of this meeting as well as in the Journal summary. I should like to point out that there are still a few items which have not been scheduled. I shall inform the Assembly as soon as appropriate dates for their consideration have been fixed. I shall also keep the Assembly informed of any changes in the announced schedule.

The list of speakers for all the scheduled items is now open.

AGENDA ITEM 145

CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN HAITI: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/46/L.8)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The General Assembly has before it the draft resolution contained in document A/46/L.8.

I call on the representative of Honduras to introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. FLORES BERMUDEZ (Honduras) (interpretation from Spanish): In October 1990 the General Assembly, taking note of the letters from the President of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Haiti to the Secretary-General in which the President requested assistance from the United Nations in order to achieve the peaceful and efficient development of the electoral process in Haiti, requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with regional organizations and Member States, to provide the broadest possible support to the Government of Haiti in meeting, to the extent possible, the following requests:

A nucleus of some 50 observers that would arrive in Haiti prior to voter registration and would leave only after the elections;

Reinforcement of the nucleus at the time of elections and voter registration;

Assistance to the Coordinating Committee for the security of the elections, to be provided by two or three advisers;

Observation of the implementation of the electoral security plans by specialized staff, that is, by observers, with solid experience in the public order field.

The Assembly thus reaffirmed the sovereign right of the people of Haiti to participate freely in choosing their leaders and at the same time supported

(Mr. Flores Bermudez, Honduras)

the efforts of the noble Haitian people to consolidate democratic institutions.

As a result, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected President, the first democratically elected President of Haiti, and was sworn in on 7 February 1991. Various countries and international organizations provided resources and economic and technical cooperation to help alleviate the difficult situation in Haiti.

Only a few days ago President Aristide spoke to the Assembly and moved it when he told representatives from this very rostrum of the optimistic hopes of his people.

The world learned with surprise and indignation on Monday, 30 September, that the constitutionally elected President had been deposed by brutal military action. That gave rise to protests in Haiti and in the main cities of other countries.

World public opinion soon heard news of the use of violence, military coercion and the violation of human rights in Haiti. We noted with sadness the loss of many human lives.

By a decision of its Permanent Council, the Organization of American States (OAS) convened on 30 September an ad hoc meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, in accordance with resolution 1080 (XXI-0/91), to consider the situation in Haiti. The President of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, made a statement at that meeting, where the Foreign Ministers adopted a resolution in which, in addition to condemning the events that had occurred, called for the restoration of constitutional order and, accordingly, of the popularly elected Government. It also agreed on measures and actions to seek to bring about the restoration of the democratic Government in that country.

(Mr. Flores Bermudez, Honduras)

In addition to reiterating the vigorous condemnation by the Permanent Council of the OAS of the grave events that had occurred in Haiti, the Foreign Ministers recommended that Member States take action to bring about the diplomatic isolation of those who today claim to hold power in Haiti and recommended the suspension of economic and financial ties with Haiti, with the exception of those related to strictly humanitarian needs.

In accordance with the resolution, the Foreign Ministers of Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Costa Rica, the United States of America, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela, as well as the Secretary-General of the OAS, went as a matter of urgency to Haiti to inform those who had usurped power of the decisions adopted by the regional Organization.

At the same time, the Security Council met here at United Nations Headquarters to hear President Aristide. The President of the Council and 13 other members made statements condemning the events in Haiti and expressed their interest in the results of the OAS mission.

Simultaneously, the Latin American and Caribbean Group requested, under rule 15 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure, the inclusion of an additional item on the General Assembly's agenda: "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti".

The Assembly having agreed to inclusion of the item with that title, we ask the Secretariat to correct document A/46/L.8, which has been distributed as "Crisis of democracy and human rights in Haiti" instead of "Situation ...".

The OAS mission carried out its mandate quickly, and the Foreign Ministers returned to Washington to hear its report at an ad hoc meeting and to adopt the appropriate measures.

(Mr. Flores Bermudez, Honduras)

The draft resolution that I have the honour to introduce incorporates all the relevant information. I shall tell the Assembly of additional action taken by the OAS.

The report of the mission to Haiti was heard at the meeting, where the Foreign Ministers were told of a request by the President of the Republic of Haiti, contained in a letter of 7 October, that a civilian mission be set up to help find a solution to the crisis. The Ministers then reaffirmed the resolution that had already been made public, especially with regard to the restoration of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the exercise of his legitimate authority. They also stated that they would not recognize any government resulting from the illegal situation.*

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* Mr. Al-Khussaiby (Oman), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Flores Bermudez, Honduras)

Accordingly, the Ministers stated that no representative of this Government would be accepted. Moreover, they urged the member States of OAS to proceed immediately to the freezing of the Haitian State's assets and to impose a trade embargo against Haiti, except for humanitarian assistance. All such assistance should be channelled through international organizations or non-governmental organizations.

In the same resolution, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs provided that the resolution should be transmitted to the United Nations, as can be seen from document S/23132, and decided to request the States Members of the United Nations to adopt measures similar to those agreed to by the American States.

These circumstances have prompted the Latin American and Caribbean Group, which I have the honour to chair, to prepare a draft resolution, which I should like to introduce to the Assembly on this occasion. As I have stated, it embodies the information to which I have referred.

The draft resolution reflects the general desire to condemn the attempted illegal replacement of the Government of the constitutional President of Haiti and the use of violence, military coercion and the violation of human rights in that country.

In addition, the document urges to the restoration of the legitimate Government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, together with the full application of the National Constitution and the full observance of human rights in Haiti.

The Latin American and Caribbean Group makes provision in the proposed text for United Nations support to peace efforts undertaken by the regional organization, either through the Secretary-General in the discharge of his

(Mr. Flores Bermudez, Honduras)

functions or through the States Members of the United Nations as a result of their considerations in this connection, but in any case, supporting the action of OAS.

The draft resolution also indicates that once the constitutional order has been restored in Haiti, it will be necessary to increase technical, economic and financial cooperation in order to support the economic and social development efforts of the Haitian people with a view to strengthening their democratic institutions.

Moreover, it requests the Secretary-General, in view of the urgency and seriousness of the case, to submit a report as soon as possible on the implementation of the resolution. Lastly, it decides to keep open the consideration of this item until a solution to the crisis is found.

The considerations and decisions contained in the draft resolution that I have introduced are consistent with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, both in connection with the principles and purposes of the Organization and support for the action taken by the regional body, which is currently in progress.

The Latin American and Caribbean Group therefore requests that the draft resolution be adopted without a vote. We would also appreciate it if delegations wishing to sponsor the draft resolution so indicate once the consideration of the document has been concluded.

In considering this item, we must remain alert to the serious human situation in Haiti and to the consequences it could have on neighbouring countries.

The deplorable events that have occurred in Haiti in the recent past

(Mr. Flores Bermudez, Honduras)

deserve vigorous diplomatic action at the present time in order to ensure the fulfilment of the hope that, in the immediate future, the legitimate and constitutional Government of Haiti will be restored.

Mrs. McDOUGALL (Canada): Over the past year, we have seen the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe taking great risks to break free from the grip of totalitarianism. We have also seen courageous men and women from many countries beat back a dictator who had invaded the sovereign country of Kuwait. International and multilateral organizations have played a key role in promoting the protection of human rights, the respect for law and the strengthening of democracy during this tumultuous period.

I am deeply disappointed that circumstances should now require the Assembly to meet on the evolving tragedy in Haiti. I am here to express the increasing anxiety and outrage of the Government of Canada at the turn of events in that country.

On 25 September, Haiti's legitimately elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, spoke in this Chamber of his country's new democracy. Shortly thereafter, that same day, I myself spoke in this Assembly, stressing the need for nations to recognize their interdependence and the need for collective security. Canada continues to uphold and promote those principles, whether in Europe, Asia or Latin America.

In June many of us attended the OAS annual meeting in Santiago. For the first time in the history of the OAS, all member States represented there had been democratically elected. While the world had been riveted by the fall of the iron curtain and the move to democracy brought about by the resolve of the European peoples, Latin America was just as boldly rejecting dictatorship.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

It is my strong belief that neither the Haitian people nor the international community are prepared to tolerate a reversion to the arbitrary and coercive rule of earlier times.

Canada is proud to have recently joined the OAS, the only organization that is devoted to hemispheric issues. In our first year, we put forward a resolution that created the unit for democracy, the purpose of which is to promote all aspects of democratic development in the hemisphere.

(spoke in French)

In Haiti itself, the recent elections were welcomed by observers of the United Nations and OAS as free and fair. The Government of Canada placed its faith in the electoral process and made a substantial contribution in money, observers and expertise in order to ensure its success.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

For the first time in their tumultuous history, the people of Haiti exercised full sovereignty over their political destiny. When viewed from this perspective, the coup in Haiti stands out as an anchronistic event and a perfectly cynical exercise. More fundamentally, the coup in Haiti tests the very principles that underlie democratic governance. History is replete with examples of those who have abused power or have seized it in the name of the greater good of the population. This offers neither a reason nor a justification for usurping the authority of democratically elected representatives.

(continued in English)

The coup also presents a bold challenge to the international community. Will our new international political order, which we are all engaged in building, permit a lapse into arbitrary and coercive rule the likes of which we are witnessing in Haiti?

To me, the answer to this question is clear. Canada considers it the duty of the international community to exercise the necessary moral force and political will to help restore legitimate Government and basic security to the Haitian people. This past June, Canada supported OAS resolution 1080, which provided for action to be taken by the OAS if democratically elected Governments of Member States were illegally overthrown. Canada believes that the promotion of democracy, security and human rights requires more than just words. Words cannot turn famine into bounty, discrimination into equality, repression into freedom or brutality into compassion. They mean little if we fail to give ourselves the tools for effective action or if we succumb to the temptation of unilateralism.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

Last week, Canada expressed its outrage at the overthrow by a military junta of the democratically elected Haitian Government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Canada immediately suspended its development assistance programme for Haiti and others also acted in quick response. But the individual actions of Governments are not likely to restore democracy in Haiti. Canada felt that only multilateral pressure could bring about the restoration of President Aristide to his legitimate position.

For this reason, 34 Foreign Ministers of the OAS met in emergency session one week ago in Washington, D.C. I expressed there Canada's desire for the OAS to do more than express outrage. We put forth the tools for the OAS to begin taking real steps to restore constitutional order. I am encouraged to report that our efforts to achieve concerted action in the OAS met with considerable success. With the adoption of the resolution on support to the democratic Government of Haiti, the OAS demonstrated a new-found unity and sense of purpose, and showed that it is capable ot taking measures, both punitive and supportive, in the interests of restoring to the Haitian people its legitimate democratic rights.

The OAS immediately took action. Economic, military and diplomatic sanctions were recommended. The OAS agreed to send a committee of Foreign Ministers to Haiti to emphasize the unanimous rejection by member States of the action of the military. Over a period of four days, our committee travelled to Port-au-Prince three times and met with a wide variety of Haitian society for more than 23 hours.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

Canada was an active participant in this mission because we are absolutely convinced that this military coup is a grave threat not only to democracy, human rights and economic growth in Haiti, but also to the strength and preservation of democracy in our hemisphere. We in this hemisphere must not permit the military to have a veto over the democratic will of the people. All members of the OAS clearly feel the same way and have dedicated unprecedented time, effort and resources to resolving this situation.

(spoke in French)

The situation in Haiti is difficult and could deteriorate rapidly. Many Haitians have died as a result of this coup and many more face the same fate if the community of nations fails to act. What happened in Haiti last week has deep roots in Haitian history, which is one of poverty, dictatorship and systematic abuses of human rights. The inauguration of President Aristide last February raised high expectations that decisive steps would be taken by the President to strengthen the rule of law, protect human rights, and respect the separation of powers as provided for under the Constitution. These expectations were not realized. Rather, the continuation and even encouragement of mob rule provoked the coup.

(continued in English)

But a coup is an illegal act, one that pulls democracy up by its roots. We cannot accept that military intervention is the means to an end and that the people's will is overturned by the interests of the few. When a coup has overturned a democracy, member nations of this Assembly must act to protect principles wherever they are threatened. I urge all countries to join with the OAS to try to restore constitutional stability in the region.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

On Tuesday, OAS Foreign Ministers met again to consider the report of our ministerial mission and to consider what further actions should be taken. We rededicated ourselves to implement the actions put forth in our earlier resolution. We condemned the use of violence and military coercion used to illegally replace the constitutional President of Haiti. All OAS members will refuse to recognize any Government set up under these circumstances or any Government elected as a result of these illegal actions.

We have urged all OAS members immediately to impose a freeze on all assets of the Haitian Government and impose a trade embargo on Haiti, except for humanitarian aid. I believe that the new rulers cannot rule Haiti and that these actions by the OAS will convince those currently in charge that they must return power to democratically elected President Aristide. This will address the short-term but not the long-term problem in Haiti.

During our visits to Haiti, it became clear that substantial multilateral involvement would be required to establish strong democratic institutions. It is for this reason that the OAS has accepted the invitation of President Aristide to establish a civilian mission for the support and strengthening of constitutional democracy in Haiti, which will go to that country in order to assist Haitians in strengthening democratic institutions; ensuring the full application of the Constitution; instilling respect for human rights for all Haitians; and improving the administration of justice and the functioning of all institutions that support democracy. The organization of a special fund to finance this activity has been entrusted to the Secretary-General.

The mission cannot be put in place without an appropriate guarantee of the security of its members. Conditions within Haiti must be such that the mission can effectively carry out its functions. To this end, communications will be maintained with democratically constituted political institutions and

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

other sectors in Haiti with a view to ensuring the conditions in which President Aristide to return to office.

This represents a long-term commitment to Haiti and to the strengthening of its institutions. Haiti will also need substantial new resources for economic development, particularly to enhance prospects of the vast majority of Haitians who continue to live in terrible poverty. I can assure all representatives here today that Canada is seriously committed to assisting Haiti in the development of its democratic institutions and its economy, not just for now but over the long term.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

(spoke in French)

These initiatives are key, in the view of all countries in the Americas, to the restoration of Haiti's constitutional democracy. The contribution of all members of the Organization of American States (OAS) is the key to the success of those efforts. The participation of other nations in these sanctions and other actions will enable these efforts to be more effective and efficient.

(continued in English)

All nations have an interest in protecting regional security. All nations have an interest in the protection of human rights. All nations have an interest in respect for the rule of law. For these reasons I urge the members of the Assembly, on behalf of Canada, the OAS and, most importantly, on behalf of the people of Haiti, to join the OAS in its efforts to ensure the rule of law is respected in Haiti and call for the restoration of the legitimate Government of Haiti.

Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter provides for a central role for associations like the OAS in matters like this. Actions taken by that organization in the present case were clearly envisaged by the founders of the United Nations.

Although the OAS has assumed its rightful position as the forum of first instance in considering the Haitian events, the United Nations is also directly implicated.

This fact was amply recognized by the United Nations before the current troubles, when a United Nations Mission was dispatched to ensure the success of the electoral process in Haiti and again last week when the Security Council met to hear the appeal from President Aristide for a return to constitutional government.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

(spoke in French)

Having made these contributions, I am confident that the United Nations will support the OAS in its attempt to mediate and resolve this crisis, while remaining engaged in the longer-term challenges of democratic and socio-economic development. This would be in keeping with the United Nations role as the voice and conscience of the international community.

This hemisphere and the broader international community are seized of the United Nations new-found resolve. That knowledge will be ignored at the peril of those who seek to supplant the democratically elected Government in Haiti.

Mr. ACHARYA (Nepal): The spontaneous wave of democracy, freedom and human rights now sweeping the world has been a recurrent theme in the statements made during the general debate in the Assembly at the current session. Speaker after speaker has saluted the global movement towards pluralistic political systems. The statements have been marked by confidence that democracy, political pluralism and human rights are indispensable for economic development. These values constitute the very foundation of the liberal democratic society that we have set out to build in Nepal.

It was only recently that we warmly applauded the moving and eloquent address of President Aristide of Haiti to the General Assembly. We were therefore shocked by the violent usurpation of the democratically elected constitutional authority in Haiti.

After years of brutal suppression and exploitations, it was only last year that the people of Haiti had won their democratic rights. The elections there attracted unprecedented international attention. The United Nations, the Organization of American States and several governmental and non-governmental bodies observed that process and certified it as free and fair.

(Mr. Acharya, Nepal)

The military coup is thus a violent and illegal interruption of the fledgling democratic process in that country. It represents a denial of the rule of law and respect for human rights. We condemn the flagrant disregard for the constitutional process. We also condemn the violence perpetrated against the innocent citizens of Haiti.

We are heartened by the resolve of the Organization of American States (OAS) to restore the legitimate authority and democratic process in Haiti. Faced with the intransigence of the opponents of the democratic process, the OAS has moved to isolate the usurpers. In view of the economic condition of Haiti, sanctions will hurt its already suffering people. But the stakes are very high. The world democratic community cannot allow the hard-won freedom and democracy of the Haitian people just to slip away. The United Nations, which, through its Observer Group for Verification of the Elections in Haiti, played an important role in bringing democracy to Haiti, must not fail the people of that country at this critical hour. It must work in close cooperation with the Organization of American States in restoring to the people of Haiti their inalienable rights to democracy and to create conditions for the full and unfettered enjoyment of the fundamental freedoms, democracy and human rights.

Mr. ALLEYNE (Dominica): Today I address the Assembly on behalf of the 12 States members of the Caribbean Community - Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago - and also on behalf of Suriname.

The matter on our agenda, the crisis of democracy and human rights in Haiti, is of deep and continuing concern to us. The nations of the Caribbean

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

have long found inspiration and pride in the example of Haiti, the first among us to shake off the shackles of colonialism and slavery in pursuit of the dream of self-determination.

The Caribbean reaction to the events of 29 September 1991 is best summed up in the statement issued on 1 October 1991 by the Right Honourable Kennedy Simmonds, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, in his capacity as Chairman of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community. That statement reads as follows:

"The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is deeply shocked by the action of elements of the armed forces in Haiti in illegally seizing President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and members of his administration and usurping the authority of the duly constituted Government freely chosen by the Haitian people to manage their affairs. This outrageous action by the Haitian military is an unacceptable expression of cynical contempt for the declared will of the people of Haiti, which was overwhelmingly and unambiguously manifested in the elections of December 1990.*

"The Caribbean Community condemns unreservedly this flagrant assault on the unfolding democratic process in Haiti and demands the restoration of constitutional order and of Father Aristide to the presidency of the Republic. CARICOM believes that this latest act of repression by the Haitian military proves the correctness of its call in the past for concerted international assistance to consolidate democratic gains in Haiti and once more calls upon the international community to take all appropriate measures to restore democracy and the constitutionally elected Government in Haiti."

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* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

The CARICOM region has a long history of participatory democracy. Our political culture is deeply rooted in the Westminister model of parliamentary democracy. Our people have enjoyed, in substantial measure, the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by our Constitutions and derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Notwithstanding all this, we have experienced violent and unconstitutional interruptions of the democratic process in our region - in Trinidad and Tobago, in Grenada and in Suriname. In Dominica, we came remarkably close to a similar experience.

The CARICOM countries espouse democracy and unequivocally reject any system which does not afford the highest priority to the participatory principle in public affairs. We are deeply aware of the demonstration effect within a small region such as our own. Having successfully overcome attempts within our own subregion to overthrow democratically elected governments by force, we have no intention of allowing the example of success in our neighbouring countries to spill over into our own, and give our domestic revolutionaries encouragement to pursue their non-democratic ambitions.

We are firmly committed to the preservation and enhancement of participatory democracy in the entire region. We recognize a responsibility to our brothers in Haiti to support their efforts to come into the modern world and to enjoy the benefits of self-determination, of which they have been robbed for so long.

A few months ago, the international community supervised the conduct of the historic, first-ever free and fair elections in Haiti. The CARICOM States played a very central role in this process. These elections resulted in the election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the presidency by the overwhelming

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

margin of about 67 per cent of the votes cast. The Haitian people were joined by the Caribbean, Latin American and world community in celebrating his inauguration to the presidency of Haiti.

We cannot now tolerate a reversal of that situation by the forcible imposition of the will of the Haitian military, or a faction thereof. Such an imposition is no more acceptable by virtue of having been confirmed by a vote, at the point of a gun, by the Haitian Senate, in an effort to manipulate the letter of the Haitian Constitution, an instrument whose purpose is to assure the full participation of the Haitian people, not to override their will. We will not be diverted in our commitment to democracy in our region by the vulgar manipulation of the Constitution by the brute force of the Haitian military.

We have noted an effort in the United States press to discredit President Aristide for supposed breaches of the Constitution and abuses of human rights within his country. We do not condone unconstitutional behaviour nor abuses of human rights. However, we will not allow diversionary irrelevancies, better known as red herrings, to deflect our attention from the issue in this matter - the only issue with which we can deal at this time: respect for the outcome of the free and voluntary choice of the vast majority of the people of Haiti. There are separate issues here, and we must deal with them as separate issues. The priority issue is the question of respect for the democratic choice of the Haitian people.

There is not one among us who can say that there have been no allegations of unconstitutional conduct or human rights abuses by our governments or public officials. In no case, however, has it been argued that this justified a forcible military overthrow of a democratically elected government. Why now in Haiti? We must apply the same yardstick to our consideration of the

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

Haitian situation as we would apply had it been our own country. This is not the time for double standards.

The allegations we have heard and read about cannot, in any circumstances, justify the forcible removal or non-constitutional ouster of a legitimate, democratically elected government. Gangsterism, even if cloaked in the fiction of legality, cannot be allowed to rule the day. Dominica, CARICOM and Suriname unequivocally reject and repudiate any suggestion of legitimacy in the actions of the Haitian military or the subsequent action of the Senate. President Aristide is still the legitimate President of Haiti, and we recognize him as such.

The States of CARICOM and Suriname participated in the formulation of resolutions MRE/RES. 1/91 and MRE/RES. 2/91 of the Organization of American States and fully support these resolutions. We call on the United Nations to recognize the special competence of the Organization of American States in this matter and to put the weight of the United Nations behind its efforts. We call on the United Nations and its Member States to adopt the provisions of the resolutions of the Organization of American States and to implement the actions recommended by these resolutions. The United Nations and its Member States should also stand ready to adopt and support such further measures as the Organization of American States may in due course decide to adopt in an effort to arrive at a just solution to this crisis.

I call on this body to show its mettle and justify the confidence which we have in our Organization. The prestige of the United Nations would certainly, if appropriately deployed, contribute to a quick solution to this problem.

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

The nations of the Caribbean Community and Suriname therefore urge the Members of the United Nations to send an unequivocal message to the people of Haiti by unanimously adopting the draft resolution sponsored by the Latin American and Caribbean Group and presented earlier this morning by the Group's Chairman, whose untiring efforts in promoting a unified United Nations response to the crisis in Haiti I publicly salute.

I close now with the words of a talented young musician of Trinidad and Tobago, David Rudder, who captured in song over four years ago the empathy that we feel for our Haitian brothers and sisters:

"When there is anguish in Port-au-Prince,
Don't you know it's still Africa crying?
We are outing fires in faraway places
when our neighbours are burning.
The middle passage is gone,
So how come
overcrowded boats still haunt our lives?
I refuse to believe that we good people
will forever turn our hearts
and our eyes ... away.
Haiti, I am sorry, we have misunderstood you.
One day we'll turn our heads
and look inside you.
Haiti, I am sorry
One day we'll turn our heads
and restore your glory."

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

In conclusion, I say that we can be satisfied with nothing less than the reinstatement to his office of the President of the Republic of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Mr. VAN SCHAIK (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Community and its member States.

It is the long-standing position of the European Community and its member States that all peoples have an inalienable right freely to determine, in accordance with the rules of international law, their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development. The peoples have the right to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage.

The unanimous adoption, less than a year ago, of resolution 45/2, on electoral assistance to Haiti, and the exemplary manner in which the Secretary-General has acted upon the provisions contained therein highlight the special and continuing commitment of the United Nations to strengthening democracy in Haiti.

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

On 28 December 1990, the European Community and its member States welcomed the fair and orderly manner in which the presidential elections of 16 December in Haiti had been conducted. The Twelve indicated at that time that the expression of the people's will through the democratic process had the potential to be a major breakthrough in Haiti's long struggle towards the establishment of a society built on the rule of law, respect for human rights and the promotion of social justice and economic progress.

Subsequent developments, including a failed attempt in early January of this year to undo the results of the elections even before the inauguration of the elected President, sadly proved how much longer the struggle would become.

The violent events of 30 September were cause for great dismay. In their Declaration of 3 October the European Community and its member States unreservedly condemned the military coup against the country's first democratically elected President, which took place despite the clear and repeatedly expressed popular will to defend the constitutional order. The Community and its member States expressed their strong support for the legitimate authorities as well as for the democratic forces in Haiti and called for an immediate return to the rule of law and the restoration of the legitimate government of that country.

Pending that, the European Community immediately suspended the economic assistance decided upon in the framework of the Lomé Convention. Member States with bilateral programmes suspended their economic assistance with the exception of programmes for humanitarian support.

The Twelve support the efforts of the Organization of American States (OAS), and its resolutions of 3 and 8 October 1991; they express the hope that the provisions in these resolutions will be implemented without delay. The

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

Twelve support in particular the swift dispatch of high-level missions under the aegis of this regional organization. They trust that the civilian mission envisaged by the OAS will make an effective contribution to the return of the legitimate Government and the restoration of constitutional order in Haiti.

The Twelve welcome the statement delivered by the President of the Security Council on 3 October when President Jean-Bertrand Aristide appealed to the Council for international support.

The Twelve regard the inclusion on the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly of an additional item, entitled "Crisis of Democracy and Human Rights in Haiti", as an appropriate and timely response of the Organization to the recent events in Haiti, and are pleased to be in a position to support the draft resolution submitted by the Latin American and Caribbean Group, which was just introduced by the Permanent Representative of Honduras on behalf of the Group.

By this means, the European Community and its member States reiterate their strong support for the democratic forces in that country and stand ready to support, in cooperation with regional efforts, appropriate measures aimed at the restoration of the rule of law and the protection of human rights in Haiti.

Mr. ERDOS (Hungary) (interpretation from French): Although Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland, the countries on whose behalf I am speaking today, are geographically quite far from the Caribbean, we are far from indifferent in the face of the events that have occurred in Haiti. For these three countries the ideals of democracy, States based on the rule of law and human rights represent universal values. We consider their respect and implementation as a whole to be a crucial factor and an essential element in the maintenance of international peace and security. Our countries, which in

(Mr. Erdos, Hungary)

the very recent past have set about building States based on the rule of law, are obviously very much concerned when anything that seeks to impede, violate or eliminate these democratic ideals occurs. Accordingly, we are in full sympathy with the people of Haiti, and we wish to express our support to the legitimate leaders of the country, and to President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who were democratically elected by universal suffrage.

Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland, together with the democratic countries of the world and in keeping with world public opinion, learned with surprise and anguish of the tragic and bloody events in Haiti at the end of September. Since the military coup d'état in Port-au-Prince has significant international implications, we deem it entirely justified and necessary for the United Nations to be seized of the situation in Haiti. We therefore welcomed the convening last week of the Security Council to discuss the grave situation that has come about in the country. Similarly, we support the inclusion in the General Assembly's agenda of the item, "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti".

In our world, at the end of the twentieth century, at a time when we witness the irrepressible march of the principles of democracy, it is unacceptable and contrary to the course of history that violent action be undertaken in defiance of the will of the people, leading to the overthrow by force of the legal power in place. The situation in Yugoslavia and the attempted coup d'état last August in the Soviet Union very clearly indicate the dangers awaiting a country when its army is outside constitutional control.

(Mr. Erdos, Hungary)

The response of the international community to the military coup in Port-au-Prince and its message to the junta in Haiti will have major, indeed decisive, significance for the future of our Organization. We therefore consider it necessary to remove all ambiguity about the world Organization's position on the question of defending the state of law and democracy and protecting human rights, whether it be in the Gulf, south-eastern Europe or the Caribbean. Any present or future dictator, any potential putschist, any tyrannical or repressive regime must know that the United Nations and its Member States will not fail to pass a firm, severe sentence on any violent, unconstitutional seizure of power and, both in the General Assembly and in the Security Council, will condemn such arbitrary actions. A regime that usurps power by such methods cannot hope for understanding from other nations, much less support. Quite the contrary, it will have to face ostracism and complete isolation.

We believe that one of the most important tasks facing the United Nations is precisely to ensure that this message is heard and is put into effect in the most appropriate way. To do that, we must give new vigour to the principles of human rights and the self-determination of peoples, principles that bear a universal message transcending State borders; moreover, we must devise an interpretation worthy of our times of the principles bearing on sovereignty and on interference in internal affairs, principles that must not be used as a pretext for abuse or as camouflage for threats to the legal order and to fundamental freedoms.

(Mr. Erdos, Hungary)

The restoration of constitutional order and democracy in Haiti is of fundamental importance, for Latin America as a whole, just like Central Europe, has only recently taken the path of democracy, and the military seizure of power in Haiti and its consequences could threaten the entire process of consolidating democracy on that continent. The restoration of law in Haiti has implications also for the role the United Nations played in organizing and supervising the first free, democratic elections in the history of that country. The Government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was enabled to begin its work, to some extent, thanks to the efforts of the entire international community.

The events in Port-au-Prince are thus a challenge to the United Nations in a new - but dynamic and fast-growing - sphere of activity: that of promoting free elections and strengthening democratic principles and practices in all the States Members of the Organization. As we take up that challenge we must also consider, in the United Nations, ways in which we can make an effective contribution to the post-election flowering of those same principles and practices relating to the normal functioning of democratic institutions.

On the basis of those considerations, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland express their full support for the position adopted on this matter by the Organization of American States and for the draft resolution prepared by the Latin American and Caribbean Group. We are firmly convinced that by adopting that draft resolution the General Assembly will be acting in accordance with its Charter mandate and will be responding appropriately to the legitimate expectations of international public opinion.

Mr. MOTHIBAMELE (Botswana): As a democratically elected and peace-loving Government, the Government of Botswana joins the world community in condeming the forcible takeover of power by a handful of army officers in Haiti. In Botswana we believe in the rule of law. We believe that conflicts must be settled amicably through peaceful means. We even believe that any political party which has an unpopular programme should be removed only by a popular vote conducted through free and fair elections. Free and fair elections were conducted in Haiti under the auspices of the United Nations in December last year, and President Aristide was elected through that vote.

It was therefore a great shock to Botswana to learn of the takeover of power by force of arms within a short period of seven months after those free and fair elections.

Botswana appreciates the steps taken by the Organization of American States (OAS) in persuading the illegal, unconstitutional regime in Haiti to relinquish power in order to reinstate the constitutional President of Haiti. My delegation declares its solidarity with the OAS in calling for the immediate reinstatement of President Aristide. My delegation supports the action of the OAS and of others that have called for the imposition of sanctions against the illegal regime.

Botswana speaks for itself and for others as well. We wish to see peace prevail in Haiti and we offer our sincerest condolences to the bereaved families of the men and women who lost their lives trying to defend their small democracy.

Mr. SUMULONG (Philippines): In the context of the current global movement towards democracy and greater respect for human rights, my country - often cited as an inspiration for the "people power" that has propelled other nations towards those noble ends - cannot remain silent lest its silence be construed as indifference to the plight of the luckless people of Haiti.

Indeed, it would be odd if the Philippines - organizer and host only three years ago of the first International Conference of Newly Restored Democracies - did not speak out on this crucial item, considered in plenary meeting of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, on the crisis of democracy and human rights in a third-world State.*

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* Mr. Al-Khussaiby (Oman), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Sumulong, Philippines)

In the words of President Corazon C. Aquino in inaugurating that historic conference in Manila,

"Democracy can only be restored. It cannot be invested; it cannot be transplanted. As freedom is the natural state of man, so is democracy the natural shelter of freedom. Democracy's forms and shapes may be passed from one nation to another. But its substance is always native, is ever original in every culture, since the freedom that makes it possible is truly the people's own."

Yet another freedom advocate and statesman, who travelled from the "old world" to address that conference, was President Mario Soares of Portugal. President Soares underscored the universality of democracy in these words:

"Nowadays, I consider that pluralist democracy and respect for fundamental rights, freedom and security have universal value. One must dismiss the idea fostered by dictators that democratic life is only possible in rich and developed countries. Obviously, poverty and underdevelopment do not favour the flourishing of freedom. Anyway, dictatorships have never led, anywhere, to development or social progress. On the contrary, dictatorships were always responsible for periods of inaction, stagnation and debasing of the human mind.

"The dignity of man is the same - and deserving of respect - in any part of the world and for all peoples, regardless of race, creed or social condition."

It was in that spirit that, last year, the Philippines supported General Assembly resolution 45/2, which enabled the United Nations system to assist the people of Haiti to consolidate their democratic institutions and to hold free elections on 16 December 1990. It was also in that spirit that we

(Mr. Sumulong, Philippines)

welcomed the results of the elections as the true expression of the sovereign will of the Haitian people. And it is in the same spirit that we share the profound concern of the Haitian masses and our Latin American friends over the events in Haiti since 29 September.

While it is the position of my delegation that the present crisis in Haiti must be resolved peacefully by the people of Haiti themselves, we recognize the heavy responsibility of the Organization of American States - consistent with Article 52 of the Charter - to help the people of Haiti in their efforts to find a democratic solution that would restore peace, stability and progress in Haiti. Towards this end, the Philippines would like to suggest that the principles embodied in the Manila Declaration on Democracy, signed on 6 June 1988 by 13 nations, including nine members of the Organization of American States - Argentina, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru and Uruguay - may be pertinent.

Allow me, Mr. President, to read the pertinent portions of that First Declaration on Democracy, which appears in its entirety in Assembly document A/43/538:

> "We support the legitimacy of constitutional Governments emanating from the popular will, and we accept their principles;
>
> "We endeavour to ensure that democracy would mean the exercise of power with responsibility, and to this end, we vow to guarantee that our peoples will enjoy human rights, freedom and social justice;
>
> "...
>
> "We believe that only participatory democracy and decentralized government can genuinely bring about the exercise of people's sovereignty and increased benefits of economic and social development;
>
> "...

(Mr. Sumulong, Philippines)

"We commit ourselves to political pluralism for the free expression of divergent ideas;

"We strongly condemn all forms of terrorism and insurgency against democracy and freely elected Governments;

"...

"We reject the systematic recourse to violence to effect changes in our societies and affirm that active non-violence safeguards human dignity while effecting reform and change;

"...

"We reject external interference but are all for international cooperation in the pursuit of democratic goals;

"...

"We recognize the necessity of a continuous citizens' vigilance to sustain the restored institutions of democracy;

"We proclaim our solidarity with other peoples who remain victims of authoritarianism and totalitarianism, and are still struggling for freedom." (A/43/538, pp. 3-4)

In the words of our Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Raul S. Manglapus, "Democracy is human rights." Subvert one, and you subvert the other. Defending democracy has never been an easy task.

Twenty years ago, we Filipinos were told that Draconian measures were required to safeguard the first democracy in our part of the world. Phantom threats to the free exercise of the people's will were invented. A new parliament - truly beholden only to those who wielded the gun - was even created to mask the naked truth of conjugal dictatorship. Five years ago the

(Mr. Sumulong, Philippines)

world saw us triumph over that big lie. And we triumphed seven more times against the forces of terror and reaction.

Indeed, Mr. President, my people know this: democracy cannot be defended by destroying it.

Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand): On 25 September we heard President Jean-Bertrand Aristide speak in this Hall in celebration of the progress that had been made in restoring democracy to Haiti. He spoke of the prospects for the full recovery of his country and of his hope for his people.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

Along with the entire international community, New Zealand was shocked by the overthrow of an elected President. We share the deep concern at the way in which a so-called interim President has been installed, with the hand of the military coup leaders clearly in evidence, through the suppression of the free voice of a full and representative Parliament.

The events of the past 12 days have been devastating for a small State already burdened by great economic and social needs. The events are contrary to the trend of democratic change in the region and in the world; they are contrary to the norms and principles of the United Nations Charter; they are contrary to the preservation of peace and stability.

This is not, in our view, a situation for outside military intervention to resolve. It is now a matter of the restoration, through mediation, of the legitimate authority of the country and of democratic behaviour. It is one of the restoration of human rights, for it is the people themselves who suffer most in such political turmoil.

Under the United Nations Charter there is provision for regional action designed to achieve the specific settlement of disputes. We commend the efforts of the Organization of American States, the political forum of the region fundamentally concerned, to redress the situation in conformity with the Charter. The reaffirmation of the principles of American solidarity and good-neighbourliness set out in the Organization of American States resolution of 3 October sets the framework for that action. They reiterate the organization's support for democratic institutions, for a system of individual liberty and social justice based on respect for human rights and for the principle of due respect for non-intervention. The actions of the Organization of American States have been fully consistent with those principles. Its initiative commands our respect and support.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

At the same time, the United Nations membership retains a particular and legitimate interest in what is happening in Haiti: it demonstrated this through the provision of electoral assistance last December. New Zealand has a direct and fundamental interest in the role of the United Nations in protecting the interests of small States. We share this with all countries of the region in which Haiti is situated. We believe that the United Nations, which helped bring about democratic government in Haiti, should continue to take an active interest in the restoration of democracy in that country and in full support of the efforts of the Organization of American States. We shall support all efforts to reach rapid consensus on the draft resolution now before us.

Mrs. DIALLO (Senegal) (interpretation from French): Senegal, a country that cherishes law, liberty and democracy, is profoundly committed to the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, for it is convinced that every people must freely choose the form of government and the institutions by means of which it intends, in full independence, to conduct its domestic and external policies. However, Senegal cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of a people which has clearly been prevented from exercising its fundamental rights and freedoms. This is all the more true in the case of the Haitian people, so many of whose nationals, fleeing tyranny and dictatorship, have for decades found hospitality in Senegal.

That is why the Government of Senegal is deeply concerned at the current situation in Haiti, where since 29 September 1991 the friendly and fraternal Haitian people has been brutally stripped of its legitimate hopes for the building of the democracy it won, after so many sacrifices, with the assistance of the international community and particularly that of the United Nations. It was, after all, the United Nations which, a year ago almost to

(Mrs. Diallo, Senegal)

the day, in Assembly resolution 45/2 of 12 October 1990, made it possible to establish a democratic electoral process which led to the free, fair and democratic elections held on 16 December 1990, in which President Aristide was elected.

Obviously, the General Assembly has a genuine interest in acting to restore constitutional legality in Haiti as rapidly as possible. It is particularly justified in doing so because it was the Haitian people itself that, through its authentic and legitimate representatives, opposed the act of violence that brought about a coup d'état on 29 September last and explicitly asked for assistance from the international community, and particularly from the United Nations, to restore its freedom. Happily, after the Organization of American States and the Security Council, our General Assembly has decided to include on its agenda for this session an additional item, on this situation, and to examine it rapidly, with care and attention.

Therefore, on behalf of the Government of Senegal, I take this opportunity first of all to express our deep sympathy for the Haitian people, which in the present conditions of violence and confusion, has lost so many of its sons. I should like also to say clearly and firmly that we vigorously condemn the breach of constitutional legality in Haiti.

Senegal also supports restoration and respect of freedom in Haiti, in order that democracy and human rights can once again take their rightful place in that country, so that its people, which has already suffered so much from dictatorship, can finally, in a lasting and irreversible manner, recover its sovereign right freely to determine its own future and that of its sons and daughters and devote itself to development.

(Mrs. Diallo, Senegal)

The Government of Senegal is therefore determined to support the measures adopted by the Organization of American States and calls upon the United Nations to support the efforts that will be exerted to put them into effect. The Senegalese delegation will support the draft resolution before us.

I shall conclude by expressing the hope that our Assembly will live up to the expectations of a battered people that some wish to crush, and that it will do so by reflecting in specific actions the widespread opinion expressed in the general debate at this session in favour of a new international order based on peace, security, solidarity and respect for democracy and fundamental human rights. By doing so our Assembly will spare the Haitian people further suffering and make it possible for the United Nations to strengthen its newly restored credibility in a world where from this time onward it will have to play an important role based on trust, in promoting the establishment of international cooperation free from pernicious conflicts and oriented essentially towards economic and social development.

Mr. MONGBE (Benin) (interpretation from French): Mr. President, my delegation wishes to congratulate you on the inclusion in our agenda of item 145 concerning the crisis of democracy and human rights in Haiti.

Through the adoption without a vote by the General Assembly of resolution 45/2, entitled "Electoral assistance to Haiti", on 10 October 1990, the international community extended its support to the democratic process in Haiti. This enabled that country to acquire democratic institutions with an elected President on 16 December 1990 through direct universal suffrage by an overwhelming majority of 67 per cent of the votes cast in the first ballot. Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide thus became the first democratically elected President in Haiti in many decades.

The positive development of the political situation in Haiti, which had long been subjected to an implacable dictatorship, was indeed consistent with one of the profound trends of our times towards respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

However, the bloody coup d'état on 29 September 1991 brutally halted the democratic process that had been under way for several months in Haiti and temporarily obliged the Constitutional President, Jean-Bertrand Aristede, to seek exile in Venezuela.

In considering the question of the "Crisis of democracy and human rights in Haiti", the General Assembly is showing once again its importance among the main organs of the United Nations, one of whose objectives is the maintenance of international peace and security through the promotion, defence and protection of fundamental rights, including civil and political rights.

The events that took place in Haiti during the past two weeks represent a dangerous precedent for the future of the development of democracy in the world and clearly show that democracy is still fragile in our countries.

(Mr. Mongbe, Benin)

This is why my Government did not hesitate to state its position in favour of the restoration of the constitutional order thus violated by making public a declaration dated 2 October 1991, which I shall now read out aloud:

"On 29 September 1991, the international community learned with stupefaction and indignation of the putsch that had occurred in the Republic of Haiti and which threatens the process of the democratization that had finally in the past few months helped rescue the people of that country from a merciless dictatorship they had long endured.

"The Government of the Republic of Benin in proclaiming once again its total dedication to the ideals of democracy, condemns most vigorously and unambiguously that coup d'état by force which runs counter to the course of history and brutally dashed the hopes of a people historically and culturally so close to the Beninese people.

"Aware of the irreversible nature of the march of the peoples of the world towards democracy and progress, the Beninese Government sincerely desires a speedy return to constitutionality in Haiti and, in particular, the restoration of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to his office, and the reestablishment of all democratic institutions.

"The Government of the Republic of Benin reaffirms on this occasion the solidarity of the Beninese people with the Haitian people and all other peoples of Africa and the world who are struggling for freedom and democracy and urges them to be ever more vigilant."

Supported by this declaration, my delegation wishes, on behalf of the people and Government of Benin, to reaffirm its support for the resolution of the Organization of American States and its total commitment to the ideals of democracy.

(Mr. Mongbe, Benin)

In any case, clearly this coup d'état has as its sole goal to plunge the Haitian people once more into the grips of an anachronistic and bloody dictatorship when it had just emerged from a long night of the merciless reign of the Macout terror. Proof of this lies in the fact that violations of the human rights and the murder of hundreds of citizens were perpetrated by the henchmen of General Cedras.

As such the coup d'état of 29 September 1991 is an offence to the sovereignty of the Haitian people; and the presentation by the military junta of so-called violations of human rights is simply a shame-faced sophistry aimed at justifying an illegal and unacceptable act at this end of the twentieth century.

It is on this basis that we support measures directed towards maintaining the economic embargo decided on by the Organization of American States against Haiti until constitutional order is restored.

We appeal to the international community to continue bringing pressure to bear on the military junta that should immediately put an end to its political adventure. The Haitian people have suffered enough. It aspires to peace, well-being and progress.

My delegation is convinced that without democracy there can be no peace, and without peace there can be no true social and economic development for the well-being of the individual.

Lastly, my delegation wishes to join in sponsoring draft resolution A/46/L.8, submitted by the delegation of Honduras, with the hope that it will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): The support expressed by previous speakers for the restoration of democracy in Haiti is heartening and

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

uplifting. Progress towards democracy everywhere, but particularly in this hemisphere, has been remarkable and we are convinced that it will continue. In contrast, the armed men who illegally and temporarily seized power in Haiti are marching against the tide of history. That small band must not prevail over the more than one and a half million people who participated in the free, fair and internationally monitored elections in Haiti. Democracy, constitutional order and, most important, the people of Haiti will triumph.

The United States condemns the assault on Haiti's democratically elected Government and on the people of Haiti who elected that Government, and we condemn the killings and violence committed against innocent people.

The United States does not and will not recognize the self-appointed junta that has illegally usurped power in Haiti. Nor will we recognize any other government that may result from this illegal situation.

This is a time for collective action. The Organization of American States (OAS) has acted promptly and resolutely to restore democracy in Haiti. We fully support the demand by the Organization of American States for the immediate restoration of President Aristide's legitimate constitutional rule, which was reiterated in the resolution adopted on 8 October by the Organization of American States at the ministerial level, a resolution which also, among other things:

Strongly condemns the use of violence and military coercion and the decision to replace illegally the Constitutional President of Haiti;

Declares that no Government that may result from this illegal situation will be accepted;

Urges OAS member States to freeze immediately the assets of the Haitian State and to impose a trade embargo on Haiti, except for humanitarian aid,

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

which should be channelled through international agencies or non-governmental organizations;

Accedes to the request of President Aristede that a civilian mission be constituted to reestablish and strengthen democratic institutions in Haiti; and

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

Requests the Secretary-General of the OAS to keep open channels with the democratically constituted political organizations in Haiti and other sectors in order to facilitate dialogue with a view to ensuring the modalities and guarantees that will make it possible for President Aristide to return to office.

In addition, the OAS adopted on 3 October at the ministerial level a resolution that:

Recommends that States and international organizations suspend assistance to Haiti;

Recommends that States diplomatically isolate Haiti;

Calls upon all States to cease transfers of military or police assistance, weapons and munitions to Haiti; and

Urges the United Nations and its specialized agencies to take into account the spirit and aims of the OAS resolution.

The United States strongly supports the efforts of the OAS to resolve the crisis in Haiti, and we fully endorse these two resolutions adopted by the OAS. My Government has suspended assistance to Haiti, has frozen the assets of the Haitian State in our country and is taking steps to implement the other provisions contained in the OAS resolutions. Other Governments are taking similar steps. The United States calls upon all Member States, the United Nations and its specialized agencies to adopt measures in keeping with the terms of the OAS resolutions.

My Government also strongly supports draft resolution A/46/L.8, which is before the General Assembly. Indeed, the draft resolution has special significance. The United Nations is especially qualified to speak in this crisis, since the United Nations Observer Group for the Verification of the Elections in Haiti played a key role in restoring democracy in Haiti.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

The United Nations, and the entire world, must send a clear message to that small group which has seized power in Haiti: Your regime is illegitimate. It has no standing in the Western hemisphere and the international community. Until democracy is restored you will be treated in this hemisphere as a pariah - without assistance, without friends and without a future.

To the people of Haiti we send the following message: Do not despair. You are not alone. The people of the world are with you.

My Government also calls upon all the people in Haiti, military and civilian, regardless of political persuasion, to desist from all violent actions. As Secretary of State Baker said at the 2 October ministerial meeting of the OAS,

"... Violence only begets more violence, and the way to justice lies in the rule of law, not in recourse to violence."

It was only last year that the people of Haiti won their democratic rights through elections which were held with unprecedented international support. The United Nations, the OAS and the world democratic community helped monitor and verify that the electoral process was open, free and fair. Jean-Bertrand Aristide was chosen by an overwhelming majority of the Haitian people. He is the democratically elected President of Haiti. In an eloquent and important statement on 3 October, he informed the Security Council about the sordid events in his country. He and his Government deserve our support.

The unconstitutional and violent seizure of power by a small group of armed men denies the Haitian people their right of self-determination and is a violation of their fundamental human rights. This violent and illegal action

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

must not and will not succeed. The inalienable right of all the people of Haiti to democracy and constitutional rule must be restored.

Mr. ELIASSON (Sweden): On this important occasion I have the honour to speak briefly on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

One year ago the General Assembly adopted resolution 45/2 on electoral assistance to Haiti. The international community thereby reaffirmed the sovereign right of the people of Haiti to choose their own Government in free and fair elections. A concrete plan for electoral assistance, including the dispatch of a United Nations Observer Mission, was approved.

On the whole, the election process was carried out in a free and fully fair and satisfactory manner. The newly elected President was duly inaugurated on 7 February 1991. The active involvement of the United Nations to assist the electoral process gives us, as Member States, a special responsibility for the consolidation of democracy in Haiti.

The Nordic countries strongly condemn the coup against Haiti's legitimate Government. The will of the people of Haiti, as expressed in free and fair elections, must be respected. The Nordic countries call for the immediate return of the rule of law and the restoration of the democratic authorities in Haiti. We look forward to the full application of the national Constitution, an immediate end to all violence and full respect for human rights in Haiti.

The Nordic Governments have taken positive note of the strong condemnation by the Latin American and Caribbean States of the coup in Haiti. By resolutions of the OAS, the States of the region have taken concrete,

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

constructive measures aimed at the restoration of the constitutional order. It is our hope and expectation that these regional endeavours will bear fruit and decisively influence events in Haiti. Let us also remember that these important developments in Haiti involve fundamental matters of principle affecting in the end the position of democracy everywhere. The present strong global trend towards democracy must not be broken.

In the light of these observations, the Nordic Governments welcome the inclusion of the new agenda item, "Crisis of democracy and human rights in Haiti".

We are confident that the draft resolution on Haiti contained in document A/46/L.8 will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. MOULTRIE (Bahamas): I wish to pay tribute to my colleague, the Permanent Representative of Honduras, for the expert manner in which, as Chairman of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, he presided over our deliberations to enable the Group to reach consensus on a draft resolution on the crisis of democracy and human rights in Haiti. My delegation associates itself fully with his statement on behalf of the Group. The Bahamas also fully shares the views expressed on behalf of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) by the Foreign Minister of Dominica.

Cognizant as we are of the imperative need to restore constitutional order in Haiti, the Bahamas supported the OAS resolution, as it will support the draft resolution presently before the General Assembly. Although we could not speak with certainty, we were optimistic that genuine elections held under international supervision would bring to the people of Haiti the democracy which had eluded them for decades. The Government of the Bahamas therefore strongly supported the electoral process, within CARICOM, the OAS and the United Nations.

(Mr. Moultrie, Bahamas)

We are now understandably alarmed by this most recent departure from constitutional government in Haiti. It comes only seven months after the inauguration of a President, whose electoral victory was verified by teams of observers provided by the United Nations and hemispheric and subregional organizations. The Bahamas is particularly anxious for a speedy, peaceful resolution of the crisis in Haiti so that the renewed suffering of the Haitian people may cease and the first uncertain steps towards democracy and development, set in motion in February of this year, may be resumed.

As one of Haiti's nearest neighbours, the Bahamas has become particularly sensitive to the fate of the Haitian people. We are, however, obliged to acquaint this Assembly with the serious implications for the Bahamas of the economic, trade and financial measures that will be put in place against Haiti, as a consequence of the adoption of the resolutions of the OAS and this Assembly. The inescapable conclusion is that these measures will have a more forcible impact on Haiti's poor than on the military. The search for relief from economic hardship and internal strife will undoubtedly set in motion a massive outflow of persons to neighbouring countries. For more than three decades the Bahamas has been first a destination of choice and subsequently and additionally a preferred transit passage for thousands of Haiti's dispossessed who seek a better, safer life abroad.

As early as 1987, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that there were some 40,000 Haitians in the Bahamas. These Haitian nationals, almost all illegal and undocumented, constituted at that time some 17 per cent of the total population of 230,000 Bahamians. Today, estimates of these numbers continue to increase. As a small archipelagic developing State with a limited resource base, the Bahamas has sought to

(Mr. Moultrie, Bahamas)

address this problem in the most humane way and on the basis of mutual respect and cooperation with its sister Caribbean country.

To this end, the Bahamas only recently held the first round of high-level talks with the Government of President Aristide so as jointly to develop a strategy for the repatriation of the sizeable number of illegal Haitian nationals. These talks, which were concluded in Nassau just prior to the events of 29 September, were to be followed by the second round in Port-Au-Prince. We had high expectations for negotiating a successful agreement. The future of these talks is now gravely uncertain.

The Bahamas, in an effort to assist its sister Caribbean State, has always supported a legal flow of immigrants and will continue to do so. The reality is, however, that illegal and undocumented Haitians pose a tremendous socio-economic burden on the Bahamas. This burden is made manifest through compelling demands on the educational, health and social service sectors. Nevertheless, my country is making every effort to ensure that it discharges its responsibilities in keeping with international human rights obligations.

The international community must recognize that the resources of the Bahamas are insufficient to withstand a renewed influx of illegal immigrants, without serious threat to its national well-being. The absorptive capacity of the Bahamas has long been reached, and it simply cannot absorb any more.

A comprehensive approach to the problem of Haiti is not only warranted, but is also imperative. The restoration of the constitutional order in Haiti must be accompanied by substantial economic assistance. Our strategy must emphasize not only democracy, but also development. Pope John Paul II, himself a great champion of peace, said from this rostrum, "Development is another name for peace". The Bahamas shares this philosophy. In the interest

(Mr. Moultrie, Bahamas)

of the peace of the Caribbean subregion, the Bahamas has consistently advocated a comprehensive programme of assistance to Haiti. We will continue to support fully any and all efforts of the international community to set Haiti on the path of genuine growth, development and peace.

Mr. VORONTSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): It was with deep concern that we, in the Soviet Union, learned that on 30 September, as a result of the military coup in Haiti, the Government of President Aristide was overthrown - the first President elected by legal, democratic means at the end of last year. These unconstitutional actions committed by a group of military men were a challenge to the prestige and authority of the United Nations and of the Organization of American States, under whose supervision and with whose assistance the electoral process in Haiti was conducted. A resounding and unanimous condemnation of the anti-constitutional actions of the coup conspirators - and not only were the democratic institutions of the country the victims, but also totally innocent, peaceful civilians - was most clearly expressed in the course of the meeting of the Security Council, held on 3 October, in the statements of a number of regional organizations and individual States.

In our view, the position of principle taken by the members of the OAS is worthy of the utmost support. At their special meeting at the level of Ministers for Foreign Affairs they approved resolutions in which the events in Haiti were described as a flagrant, violent and illegal violation of the process of the legal exercise of power by the democratic Government of that country. In these resolutions, the Latin American States indicated a number of urgent measures designed to bring about the immediate restoration of legality and constitutionality in Haiti. The efforts undertaken at the

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

regional level should, in our view, be buttressed by the high authority of the United Nations.

The long-suffering people of Haiti are entitled to count on the solidarity of the international community which, we have no doubt, will give its strength to defend its democratic achievements. Such solidarity and support are of universal significance, extending beyond the confines of this specific case. Recent events have made it abundantly clear that the world has entered a new era, where respect for democracy and human r'ghts is increasingly being acknowledged as the fundamental principle of the development of nations, and interaction at the international and regional levels in defence of legality, based on the freely expressed will of the people, is becoming an important factor in contemporary international life.

The events in Haiti have demonstrated the vulnerability of the democratic process to force of arms and have confirmed the great importance of international opposition to illegal and inhumane actions, which undermine the constitutional order, wherever such actions may take place.

The Soviet Union vigorously condemns the anti-constitutional actions in Haiti that caused loss of human life and violated the democratic process in that country, a process supported by the majority of the Haitian people. We hope that violence will immediately be halted and constitutional order fully restored in Haiti.

Mr. MERIMEE (France) (interpretation from French): My delegation fully supports the statement made on behalf of the European Community and its member States by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands.

France welcomes the fact that the General Assembly has included on its agenda an item on the crisis of democracy and human rights in Haiti, and that the Assembly, on the proposal of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, is about to adopt - I hope by consensus - a draft resolution, co-sponsored by France, condemning this flagrant violation of human rights, demanding the return of democracy and the rule of law in Haiti, and supporting the efforts of the Organization of American States.

Immediately after the coup d'état, the French authorities condemned it very strongly and called for the urgent restoration of the legitimate Government of Haiti. France also firmly denounced the illegal decision by the Port-au-Prince authorities to appoint an "interim president of the Republic", an act which constituted a second coup d'état - this one pseudo-constitutional. In our view, the Government resulting from this new recourse to arms has no legitimacy. President Aristide, voted into office last year by a very large majority in free and democratic elections supervised and guaranteed by the United Nations, is the sole embodiment of legitimate constitutional order. He must be allowed to exercise his functions again as soon as possible. I should like to pay a tribute to President Aristide for his courage, his devotion to the Haitian people and his determination to see democracy restored in his country, as he so eloquently stressed in his statement before the Security Council on 3 October last.

The international community did not remain passive in the face of the violation of democracy and human rights committed on 30 September in Haiti. Many measures were immedately taken throughout the world to isolate this

(Mr. Mérimée, France)

de facto authority. France, for its part, immediately suspended its bilateral assistance, except for that of a strictly humanitarian nature. Other measures were also taken by the European Community, as was recalled by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands.

As for the Foreign Ministers of the Organization of American States, by adopting two resolutions unanimously and by sending a mission to Haiti they confirmed their support for legitimate authority. Only yesterday, they demanded further measures: the immediate freezing of the property of the Haitian State by member States; a trade embargo, except for humanitarian considerations; and the establishment of a civilian mission with the task of restoring and strengthening democracy in Haiti. My country supports these provisions unreservedly and very strongly. It is already implementing many of them and hopes they will be widely applied by Member States.

I very much hope that this mobilization of the international community, which the General Assembly will be solemnly manifesting in adopting the draft resolution by consensus, will have the desired effects. All possible pressure must be exerted on the de facto authorities in Haiti to restore the rule of law and respect for the will of the Haitian people.

Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu): One of life's ironies is the fact that on occasion simultaneous events of similar significance occur. Today is one such occasion. This morning the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly met to discuss an item of great importance to the decolonization process. The Special Committee against Apartheid is now meeting to observe the day of solidarity with South African political prisoners. We now meet in the plenary General Assembly to consider the crisis of democracy and human rights in

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

Haiti, a country in which the entire population is now held in political captivity.

Symbolic significance lies in the fact that 200 years ago the people of Haiti rose as one in one of the earliest of all successful anti-colonial revolts, which was, at the same time, a revolution against slavery and the injustice of shackling any human being because of the colour of his or her skin. In the aftermath of that successful social revolution, Haiti's people were forced, through no fault of their own, to undergo long and torturous periods of deprivation and brutalization. Now, their dream of justice and democracy has once again been driven into exile by a group of thugs with weapons.*

We, the members of the international community, cannot restore the dream of the Haitian people and reinstall the legitimate political authority of Haiti. Freedom is, after all, not a gift to be bestowed upon any people by others. True democracy cannot be imposed on any country from outside its own borders. The seeds of true democracy must be planted, fed and watered inside each country by that country's own sons and daughters.

None the less, there is a very important role for the international community. We can and should give genuine support and encouragement to the people of Haiti. It is true that the coup d'état against Haiti's legitimately elected President appears to be an internal matter. However, those who have assaulted Haiti's fledgling democracy cannot possibly succeed in the face of the opposition they face from their own people unless we allow them to succeed.

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* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

We must continue the isolation of those who illegally seized power in Haiti. This is our moral obligation. Haiti's people are not armed with airplanes. They are not armed with tanks. They are not armed with guns. Instead, they are armed with things more important and more frightening to tyrants everywhere. They are armed with courage. They are armed with truth. They are armed with conviction. They are armed with desperation and a knowledge that the future of their country and of their children hangs in the balance.

Just as the international community stands with the people of South Africa, just as the international community stands with colonized peoples in every corner of the globe, just as the international community stands for justice and equality for every man, woman and child, so too must we now stand with the people of Haiti. The crisis of democracy and human rights in Haiti is a crisis of democracy and human rights for us all.

It is for those reasons that we have joined in sponsoring the draft text set forth in document A/46/L.8. It is for those reasons that today we conclude by stating at this moment in history: "Nous aussi sommes haïtiens - we too are Haitians".

Mr. DRAME (Mali) (interpretation from French): The people of Haiti are today living through one of the most difficult moments of their history as a result of the bloody intervention of the military on 30 September in Port-au-Prince. After having been subjected to many long years of dictatorship, that people had for the first time acquired democratic institutions, late in 1990, that enabled them freely to choose their representatives. As a result, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected by a large majority to head the Haitian State. The United Nations, in supervising those free elections, gave its blessing to the young democracy.

The coup d'état of 30 September is thus a challenge to the international community that must not be tolerated and that must be responded to at once. Indeed, nothing can justify that unconstitutional act, which is contrary to the deep aspirations of the Haitian people for freedom and justice.

The positive role that the Organization played in the Haitian electoral process should encourage us fully to assume our responsibilities to bring about the restoration of the country's legitimate authorities. In extending our firm support to the people and to the democratically elected Government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide we will be helping to isolate the Port-au-Prince putchists and cut off any further attempt to jeopardize democratic institutions.

In faithful memory of the sacrifices our people made on 26 March of this year to establish a true democracy in Mali, the Government of Mali strongly condemns the military coup d'état in Haiti, calls for the return of the rule of law and restoration of the legitimate authorities, expresses its support for President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and for the Haitian people, and supports the courageous decisions taken by the Organization of American States.

(Mr. Drame, Mali)

Speaking in the general debate a few days ago, I appealed to the international community to play a tangible role in the consolidation of emerging democracies. The many problems such young democracies must face make them vulnerable to the pernicious acts of political opportunists who care nothing either for human rights or for the greater good of peoples. Accordingly, while seeking to achieve the immediate return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to his country, we must also ensure that the Haitian Government and people receive sizeable economic, financial and technological assistance.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm my country's support for any action aimed at restoring constitutional legality in Haiti. In that connection my delegation supports the draft resolution submitted by Honduras and contained in document A/46/L.8.

Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh): We are now witnessing momentous changes in the world scenario. There has been a worldwide movement towards democracy, freedom and respect for human rights.

In my own country, Bangladesh, after 9 years of struggle our people finally got rid of the previous autocratic regime, which was a government without legitimacy. This is yet another occasion for me to recall with deep gratitude the martyrs who shed blood to regain their basic political rights and the uncompromising role of our present Prime Minister in carrying out that relentless struggle. The freest and fairest parliamentary elections were held in February of this year, and the Prime Minister, Mrs. Khaleda Zia, took over the reins of the democratically elected Government in March 1991 - an election that was held under a completely neutral government. We thank the international observers who oversaw that election.

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

Thus, yet another flag of genuine democracy was added to the world scene. Here, I should like to quote a recent statement by my Prime Minister:

"Our rejoicing today derives particular impetus from the vows made by our martyrs in pursuit of their dream to make our hard-won independence equally meaningful to all segments of the people. Today, that dream assumes tangible shape as we seek to establish a truly democratic society."

Because the Government of Begum Zia is a people's Government, she was able to bravely face the worst-ever cyclone, which struck Bangladesh in April of this year, soon after her assumption of power. The world community came out in her support at that critical hour, and we are grateful to it.

The winds of freedom have been blowing down old and entrenched structures everywhere. We were heartened when free and fair elections were held in Haiti under the supervision of the United Nations in December 1990. The international community watched the successful electoral process in Haiti with great satisfaction.

Our meeting is taking place today against the backdrop of a tragic moment in the history of Haiti. The recent developments in that country came as a great shock to the international community. The people and Government of Bangladesh express their deepest concern at the overthrow of the legally and democratically elected Government of Haiti by the resort to a totally unacceptable and unconstitutional method of changing the reins of power. The mandate of the people has been repudiated with impunity, and this is to be condemned in unequivocal language.

We regret the eruption of violence and oppression committed against innocent people. We cannot but express deep sorrow at the loss of human lives

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

in Haiti, for it reminds us of our own struggle at the cost of blood to restore the right to vote and fully choose our Government, which our determined people finally did. To be candid, we in Bangladesh can never be friends with people who trample upon a democratically elected government by unconstitutional methods.

The Organization of American States has adopted a number of measures for the peaceful restoration of democracy and the legitimate Government in Haiti. Bangladesh commends its efforts. It is our sincere hope that those initiatives and the sustained support of the international community will lead to an early restoration of the democratically elected Government of Haiti and thus bring peace, stability and the social and economic development of the friendly people of Haiti.

Mr. LONGCHAMP (Haiti) (interpretation from French): I should like to thank all the delegations here that have offered their support to us in these difficult days. I also wish to thank regional groups and the various speakers who have spoken this morning. In particular, we would like to thank the Latin American and Caribbean Group and, especially, its Chairman, the representative of Honduras, Ambassador Flores Bermudez.

On 24 September last, the General Assembly welcomed the democratically elected President of the Republic of Haiti, the Reverend Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Today, President Aristide is in Caracas, Venezuela, exiled from the land of his birth and stripped of his presidency following a military coup d'état on 29 September last, four days after his return from the United Nations.

At the time when I am addressing the Assembly, Haiti is under the heel of a military group which has no regard for life, property or national or international public opinion. Since the violent coup de force of 29 September, the country has been plunged into anarchy. The human rights situation is disturbing. The number of dead is constantly increasing and is now more than a thousand, while the number of injured is more than we can count. Freedom of the press no longer exists: the organs of the press - radio, newspapers and television - have been closed down after having been plundered, pillaged and destroyed. Women are being raped, children beaten and men executed by soldiers on the rampage. It is the primitive and retrograde dictatorship of Duvalier returning to Haiti.

On 8 October last, after having machine-gunned parliament and manhandled some of its members, the military forced the National Assembly to violate the Constitution by illegally electing a president of their choice. Haiti is now

(Mr. Longchamp, Haiti)

back to the time of the bayonets. To stiffle the voice of the people, the military is keeping the people under a constant reign of terror.

These tragic events do not mean just the sudden cut-off of a political experiment; the door is also opened to a large-scale tragedy in which the population will seek refuge elsewhere, outside the territory of Haiti, in conditions which in the past have taken such a toll and caused so much suffering and privation. At a time when Haiti has been welcoming its nationals who had sought refuge in neighbouring countries because of an irregular situation, a massive exodus from Haiti would undoubtedly be a source of tension that could jeopardize regional peace.

Furthermore, if the conspirators of the coup d'état were to succeed in their ambition of imposing their dictatorship on the Haitian people, the way would be open to similar initiatives in a number of countries in the region where the military are still savouring the taste of political power.

On 16 December 1990, the majority of the Haitian people went to the ballot box to vote and democratically elected a president, after almost 200 years of independence. This historic "first" was possible because the international community, through the United Nations and the Organization of American States, agreed to accompany the Haitian people along the road in its quest for a democratic society. The Haitian people will be for ever grateful for that action.

If there is one characteristic by which Haiti is universally recognized: it is its poverty. Statistics show that Haiti is the poorest country in the hemisphere and one of the poorest in the world. Without wishing to challenge that reality, we ask members to look beyond the figures and they will see an even more shocking reality: a small minority controls almost all the

(Mr. Longchamp, Haiti)

resources of the country and it is this minority which once again opposes the will of the majority in an attempt to safeguard its privileges and interests to the detriment of the whole nation. Let it be very clear that as long as the iniquitous and unjust situation remains, Haitian society will remain a divided, polarized and anti-democratic society, and international assistance will only serve to strengthen the repressive and unjust dictatorial structure and the coercive power of that minority over the majority.

The present situation in Haiti represents a challenge to the will of the Haitian people and a threat to democracy and freedom. President Aristide stressed this in his statement to the Security Council on 3 October last, when he said:

> "This threat to democracy in Haiti is also a threat to democracy all over the world; for what is happening today in Haiti can also happen elsewhere." (S/PV.3011, pp. 4-5)

I think it is the duty of the international community not to allow the continuation of such a dishonest situation. Just as the General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 45/2 on 10 October last year on electoral assistance to Haiti, which made possible the holding of the first free, fair and democratic elections in Haiti and the victory of democracy over dictatorship, it is an imperative obligation on the part of the international community vigorously to condemn the grave events which have occurred in Haiti and to do everything possible to restore the democratic process, which had begun so well. The unanimous adoption of the draft resolution before us will be a very strong and unequivocal message to those who in Port-au-Prince are keeping hostage a whole people which has so often said "No" to dictatorship, a dictatorship which wants to impose on the people once again this band of criminals, murderers and drug traffickers.

The PRESIDENT: (interpretation from Arabic): I call on the representative of Honduras, who wishes to introduce some revisions that were agreed upon with respect to the draft resolution, with a view to reaching a unanimous decision.

Mr. FLORES BERMUDEZ (Honduras) (interpretation from Spanish): I am speaking on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. After lengthy and broad consultations, the Group wishes to make the following changes in the draft resolution, which are intended to enrich its content. We do not think that they will in any way create any controversy.

(spoke in English)

In the third preambular paragraph, the word "sacrifice" should be replaced by the word "loss", so that it would read "the loss of human lives".

In the sixth preambular paragraph, we propose the deletion of the words "has the duty of", and revision of the phrase to read, "the Organization promotes and encourages respect for human rights".

In the last preambular paragraph, the seventh, we would replace the words "Taking note of" by the word "Welcoming".

I turn now to the operative part.

Paragraph 1 would remain the same.

In paragraph 2 the first two lines would be replaced by the following: "Affirms as unacceptable any entity resulting from that illegal situation and demands the ...".

(Mr. Flores Bermudez, Honduras)

Paragraph 3 would read as follows:

"Requests the Secretary-General, in accordance with his functions, to consider providing support sought by the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, in implementing the mandates arising from resolutions MRE/RES.1/91 and MRE/RES.2/91 adopted by that organization;".

With regard to paragraph 4, the word "Urges" would be replaced by the words "Appeals to", so that the first phrase of the paragraph would read:

"Appeals to the States Members of the United Nations to take measures ...".

The last change is in paragraph 5. The order of the ideas it contains has been rearranged. The paragraph would read as follows:

"Emphasizes that an increase in technical, economic and financial cooperation, when constitutional order is restored in Haiti, is necessary to support its economic and social development efforts in order to strengthen its democratic institutions;".

Those are all the revisions that are being proposed.

In view of the wide consultations that were carried out by the Latin American and Caribbean Group, we should like to reiterate our hope that this draft resolution, which is the result of the consensus of our Group, will be adopted without a vote.

(spoke in Spanish)

The Latin American and Caribbean Group also requests that the title of the item be amended. Instead of "Crisis of democracy and human rights in Haiti", it should read: "Situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti".

(Mr. Flores Bermudez, Honduras)

I wish to inform the Assembly that the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Canada, Congo, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Vanuatu.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that the Latin American and Caribbean Group as a whole is the sponsor of the draft resolution and to express our gratitude for the support it has received.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The representative of Honduras has requested that the title of item 145 be changed from "Crisis of democracy and human rights in Haiti" to "Situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti" - that is to say, the word "Crisis" would be replaced by the word "Situation".

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to that revision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We shall now take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.8 and the revisions made orally by the representative of Honduras.

May I take it that the oral revisions to the third, sixth and seventh preambular paragraphs and paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5 of draft resolution A/46/L.8 are adopted?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): It has been requested that draft resolution A/46/L.8, as orally revised, be adopted without a vote.

(The President)

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/46/L.8, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/46/L.8, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 46/7).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 145.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.